National Capital Region Network

Inventory & Monitoring Board of Directors

3/18/03

MANASSAS – Stuart's Hill

BOD Participants: John Howard (ANTI), Adrian Coleman (ROCR), Don Campbell (HAFE), Dianne Ingram (CHOH), Brent Steury (GWMP), Carolyn Davis (CATO), Brian Carlestrom (PRWI), Jane Becker (MANA), and Marcus Koenen (I & M Program). <u>Other Participants</u>: John Sinclair (I & M Program), Christina Wright (I & M Program), and Mikaila Milton (I & M Program).

Agenda

Purpose of the Board of Directors (BOD): To oversee the development of the National Capital Region's monitoring strategy in a way that preserves and enhances the region's most important natural resources.

Outcomes of this meeting: (1) Update BOD on new Monitoring Plan due dates, (2) Adopt Point of Contact for Network, (3) transition Biological Inventories Coordinator to monitoring funds, and (4) review new term ecologists to develop protocols.

10:00 Welcome

> Update on Monitoring Program (Koenen)
> Update on Vital Sign Selection (Koenen)
> Update on Inventories (Sinclair)
> Update on Network Permit (Sinclair)

11:00 Point of Contact (Wright)

> *Action: Approve Network Point of Contact for NPSpecies*

11:15 Update Budget FY 03-04 (Koenen)

> Review transition for Bio. Inventories Coordinator to monitoring budget FY04

> Review new term ecologists for FY '04

11:45 New Business

12:00 Adjourn

I & M Update

I & M Hosting 3rd Annual I & M Meeting:

- The I & M program will be hosting the 3rd Annual I & M Network meeting at the National Conference Center in Lansdowne, Virginia, 18-22 August. I & M staff from around the country will be meeting to discuss critical issues related to implementing the program. Discussions will focus on vital sign selection, inventories, data management, etc. All are welcome to attend. Marcus will send out more information to the SAC and BOD as details become available.

New I & M Products:

- The I & M program has produced a variety of documents including:
> "One Minute Update" – brief update sent out via email
> "The Monitor" – an in-depth quarterly newsletter.
> Inventory Fact Sheet
> I & M Presentation – The I & M program has created a presentation that is traveling to parks within the network and can be targeted to various audiences. The Inventory and Monitoring program has already given a presentation to the interpretative rangers of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and is currently tailoring one for folks at Rock Creek Park. The I & M team is willing to travel to all parks who would like such a presentation. The presentation is currently 40 minutes long, but can be shortened if necessary.

(These handouts are available on request and can be downloaded from the I & M web page: http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/units/nw12/products.html).

Charter Amendments:

Next, Marcus Koenen proposed several amendments to the Charter governing the Inventory and Monitoring Board of Directors. Three amendments were offered.

1. He proposed that the board formally amend the charter to include the Appalachian Trail as was approved during the last BOD meeting.

2. The second amendment recognizes that the network's name has changed from National Capital Network to National Capital Region Network as originally requested by the region.

3. Amendment three recognized that Monitoring Due date given in the charter has been changed. New due dates are as follows:
> Phase II due 10/31/03
> Phase III due 12/15/04
> Final Plan due 10/1/05)

See Appendix 1. For all three amendments.

John Howard moved to accept all three amendments. Brian Carlstrom seconded the motion. There were no objections, so the motion passed by concensus.

Monitoring Update

Marcus Koenen then summarized where the Science Advisory Committee and the I & M Team are with regards to vital sign prioritization. The Science Advisory Committee has taken the vital signs generated by the working groups at the July Monitoring Workshop and combined those that could be accomplished by one monitoring method. The I & M Team will begin protocol development to get more specific information before any further prioritization can be accomplished. The Team is now proposing to develop protocols for the major categories that resulted from the combination exercise (wildlife, vegetation surveys, water monitoring, remote sensing, invertebrates, and RT & E Species/Sites. The I & M Team proposes to accomplish this work through a combination of in-house efforts and cooperative agreements/contracts through the CESU.

The next steps after this stage will be to take the information generated through protocol development and use it to do a further round of prioritization and then decide on implementation. The Board will need to approve the final plan.

Inventory Update

John Sinclair gave an update on the progress with inventories. The summary is provided on the Inventory Fact Sheet that is attached.

Network Permit Update

John Sinclair also spoke about the network permit that was approved at the last BOD meeting. The Network Permit has been approved by all superintendents and we are waiting to gain final approval from John Dennis, Ann Hitchcock, and John Goddard before the National Capital Region Network code can be incorporated into the RPRS system. All three are expected to approve the network permit, but John Sinclair has no estimate on the time frame for their approval.

Point of Contact

Christina Wright then gave a presentation on a new Point of Contact requirement for all networks. WASO is now requiring that all I & M networks designate a Point of Contact in order to facilitate communication with the service wide office on quality control of the NPSpecies database. Christina proposed a fourth amendment to the National Capital Region Network charter that would designate her as the Point of Contact for this region. The duties of the POC would be:

- managing access of NPSpecies
- orientation and training of park and regional staff
- converting legacy datasets to formats compatible with NPSpecies
- incorporating park related data from WASO data mining efforts

- ensuring that sensitive data are noted as such and restricted in NPSpecies
- ensuring that species lists are reviewed and certified using local subject experts
- ensuring that species vouchers given an ANCS+ number are entered in NPSpecies
- ensuring that species nomenclature is referenced by leading authorities and consistent through parks--would allow common names
- ensuring that all NPSpecies records are documented and accepted by park staff

Christina Wright explained that these have been part of her duties anyway, so the designation would not result in any operational change, but would confirm the responsibility for WASO. Brian Carlstrom said that it would help streamline NPSpecies updates to have Christina Wright officially take on this role.

John Howard asked for a motion to accept the proposed amendment the NCRN charter. Brian Carlstrom made the motion, which was seconded by Don Campbell. All were in favor. The motion passed. There were no objections. The amendment is found in Appendix 1.

Budget FY 03 – 04

Marcus Koenen then gave the Board an update on the I & M budget for the next fiscal year. He said that WASO had absorbed the budget cuts, so that all networks including NCRN received full funding for fiscal year '03. The budget included $747,000 for monitoring, $157,600 for inventories and $85,000 for the Regional I & M Coordinator position. Funding for FY04 looks good but it is difficult to make predictions. The I & M program will request $140,000 for inventories and $747,000 for monitoring for fiscal year '04. Marcus Koenen said that the I & M Team would give the Board an update at the fall meeting on how we plan to spend this money.

Staff Consideration

Marcus Koenen then went on to discuss the I & M Team's proposed personnel management considerations. He said that the regional coordinator's position will be advertised as a GS-12/13 to bring it in line with other regions. Christina Wright had taken on additional duties for the region and her position will be changed to a GS-12. Marcus Koenen also mentioned that the Team was considering using monitoring funds to fund the Biological Inventories Coordinator for FY04. This would free up the remaining inventory funds for additional inventories such as invertebrates. Marcus Koenen also mentioned that the Team was considering shifting two term positions to term ecologist positions to meet the programs new needs including the development of monitoring protocols needed for vital sign prioritization. Dianne Ingram and Brian Carlstrom said that it makes sense to shift the staff we already have to the protocol development. The current staff has the background knowledge that would allow them to hit the ground running.

New Business

John Howard proposed that it is time for the Board select a new chair. This position is available to anyone on the BOD. Marcus Koenen will send out an e-mail to all board members with a list of eligible board members to the board and request nominations. They will have two weeks to submit nominations to him.

Next Meeting

This date was set for September 9th at MANA at 10:00 AM.

Appendix 1. Amendments To The Charter Of The NATIONAL CAPITAL INVENTORY & MONITORING NETWORK

Amendment 1.

This amendment recognizes that the Appalachian National Scenic Trail has become a part of the National Capital Network Inventory and Monitoring Network Board of Directors.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

Amendment 2.

This amendment recognizes a change in the name of the National Capital Network identified in the Introduction - second paragraph of the Charter. The name of the network is now formally recognized as the National Capital Region Network.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

Amendment 3.

This amendment recognizes that new due dates have been established for the completion of the National Capital Region Network Monitoring Plan. The Draft Phase 2 Report will be due to WASO on 10/31/03. The Draft Phase 3 Report will be due to WASO on 12/15/04. The final Monitoring Plan will be due 10/1/05. The content of the phases are described in the Memo and its attachment to Regional Directors dated 2 May 2002 from Abigail Miller, Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science /s/ Abigail Miller.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03

Amendment 4.

This amendment designates a Point of Contact for the National Capital Region Network Databases as follows:

I. NCRN Point of Contact Justification

The National Park Species database ("NPSpecies") is one of a suite of Service-wide databases developed by the Inventory and Monitoring Program. NPSpecies is designed to document the occurrence of vertebrate and vascular plant species in national park units, and to substantiate these occurrence records by scientifically credible, high-quality references, vouchers, and observations. The master version of NPSpecies is a password-protected, web-based system; this is accompanied by a PC-based version that can be run from an individual computer using Microsoft Access.

The National Park Service, Service-wide Inventory and Monitoring Program has requested that parks designate Points of Contact (POC) for managing NPSpecies data for each park. This agreement establishes the NCRN Data Manager as the POC for all 11 park units within the National Capital Region Network. As of early 2003 network staff are continuing to populate the database and verify information. By the end of FY 2005 it is anticipated that a good first iteration of vascular plant and vertebrate species lists will be completed for most network parks. At this point the lists can reviewed and certified.

II. NCRN NPSpecies Point of Contact Responsibilities

Following is a description of NPSpecies Point of Contact responsibilities.

1. Manage web-based NPSpecies access. The POC will acquire login and password codes for all network park staff needing access to NPSpecies via the Internet, and will ensure that the appropriate level of database permissions and control are granted (e.g., read only, read-edit, or read-edit-delete access). The POC will cancel permissions in the event staff employment, duty station, or responsibilities change.

2. Provide orientation, training, and technical support to park staff on NPSpecies use. The POC will instruct NPSpecies users on the overall structure and function of NPSpecies (both web-based and local versions), provide explanations and documentation on its use; and assist with questions users may have on how to query or manipulate NPSpecies data.

3. Convert legacy data sets into formats compatible with NPSpecies. The POC will work with park staff to locate data sets containing NPSpecies-related information, and to merge any appropriate portions of these data sets into NPSpecies.

4. Ensure that voucher data obtained by WASO from national data mining efforts is accurately converted to NPSpecies and reviewed. As WASO staff obtains park-specific data from national and regional museums and herbaria, the POC will ensure that these data are accurately converted to NPSpecies and that these data are made available for review by park-based staff.

5. Ensure any new NPSpecies-related data collected from I&M or park projects are incorporated into NPSpecies. The POC will work with I&M cooperators and park resource

management staff to ensure that NPSpecies is properly updated to reflect any new data collected in the course of park research or management projects.

6. Ensure that sensitive data are designated as such, and that access to these data are restricted to the appropriate level. The POC will request that park resource management staff identify those species that may be vulnerable to disturbance if information from NPSpecies on their location or status is made available outside the park unit, or outside the National Park Service. The POC will ensure that these sensitive records are appropriately coded in NPSpecies and that distribution of the data is limited appropriately.

7. Ensure that species lists are reviewed by appropriate individuals and certified. The completeness and accuracy of species-list data in NPSpecies will be assessed by qualified reviewers (park staff or other) on a regular basis (DO #11B: Ensuring Quality of Information Disseminated by the National Park Service). The POC will be responsible for ensuring this review and certification process is undertaken and completed.

8. Ensure that new species vouchers destined for entry into ANCS+ are also entered into NPSpecies.
Data associated with species vouchers are now compatible between ANCS+ and NPSpecies. The POC will coordinate with parks so that, to the extent possible, voucher data are entered directly into NPSpecies then exported electronically to ANCS+, thus avoiding duplication of data entry.

9. Ensure that species nomenclature used for park species lists is referenced and accepted by leading authorities, and, to the extent possible, is compatible among network parks.

10. Ensure that all sources of NPSpecies records are documented, and that additions, changes or deletions to records are substantiated and performed with the concurrence of park staff.

Successful NPSpecies development and administration depends on ongoing coordination and good communication between the POC and park staff. A close working relationship between the POC and park resource management and curatorial staff will be emphasized at all times.

III.   NPSpecies Point of Contact Designation

By this agreement, the National Capital Region Network, Inventory and Monitoring Program Data Manager is designated as the NPSpecies 'Point of Contact' (POC) on NPSpecies issues and management for each of the 12 park units within NCRN. As POC for each park the NCRN Data Manager will meet the responsibilities listed under Section II of this agreement. A centralized effort at the network level helps ensure high quality control standards and relieves park resource management staff from many of the ongoing tasks related to NPSpecies database management. Database work will be closely coordinated between the NCRN Data Manager and individual park staff and NPSpecies data will be readily accessible and available to park personnel. The NCRN Data Manager will serve in the POC role for each park until such time that park species list development and certification is complete. At this juncture individual parks will have the choice of taking over the role of POC or continuing with designation of the NCRN Data Manager as the park POC. It is anticipated that most parks within the network will want the NCRN Data Manager to continue as their POC over the long-term. However, some park units with sufficient natural resource staff and expertise may desire to take over the POC role and on-

going data base maintenance and quality control once individual park species lists have been developed and certified. In this case a park may request that the POC designation be changed. The NCRN Data Manager will keep track of POC designations for network parks if they change in the future.

Passed by Board of Directors: 3/18/03